GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3424
ANSWERED ON:06.12.2016
Depletion of Ground Water
Kumar Shri P.

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether unrestricted riverbed/sand mining has led to the depletion of ground water resources and has also adversely affected the marine-ecosystem of rivers;
(b) if so, whether the Government has conducted a study for assessing the detrimental impact caused by illegal and exploitative mining activities on these riverbeds;
(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
(d) whether the Government has issued additional guidelines to curb illegal mining; and
(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a) to (c): Impact of riverbed / sand mining on the ground water resources is assessed and monitored in course of considering and granting necessary environmental clearances required as per law. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has not conducted any specific study for assessing the detrimental impact caused by illegal and exploitative mining activities in the riverbeds. However, the projects of sand mining require prior environmental clearance as per the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, as amended from time to time, notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. While according environmental clearance, the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) / State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) / District Expert Appraisal Committee (DEAC) stipulate necessary conditions for safeguarding the environment. The status of compliance of stipulated conditions of the environmental clearances of different projects, including sand mining projects, is monitored by ten Regional Offices of this Ministry in the Country. Sand mining is further regulated in terms of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 [MMDR Act] and the Mineral Concession Rules framed by the concerned State Governments. Various legal provisions for containing the menace of illegal sand mining are largely enforced by the State Governments.

(d) and (e): The Government has amended the EIA Notification, 2006, vide SO No. 141 (E) on 15.01.2016 for minor minerals with special focus on sustainable sand mining. Powers of according Environmental Clearance up to 5 hectare of individual mining lease of minor minerals and 25 hectares in clusters have been delegated to the District Environment Impact Assessment Authority (DEIAA) headed by the District Magistrate / District Collector. A District Expert Appraisal Committee (DEAC) has also been constituted to assist the DEIAA.

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